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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to assist public-private child care partnerships in engaging parents in improving child care. The guide offers information on: (1) why parents should be involved in child care partnerships; (2) roles that parents can play in partnerships; (3) how to successfully engage parents in partnerships; (4) tools for engaging parents; and (5) a list of additional resources, including organizations, publications, and Web sites to support parent involvement efforts. (EV)

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The Child Care Partnership Project

A Guide to Engaging Parents in Public-Private Child Care Partnerships

ED 449 893

PS 029181

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau

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This guide was a joint effort of Elaine Zimmerman of the Connecticut Commission on Children and the staff of the Child Care Partnership Project. Some of the ideas and strategies described emerged from the research and planning of the Parent Leadership Training Institute of the Connecticut Commission on Children.

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Introduction

The Child Care Partnership Project was created to support partnerships between the public and private sectors to improve the availability, quality, and affordability of care. As governments, businesses, philanthropies, and service providers come together to improve child care, they recognize the value of involving parents as partners. As the purchasers of care, parents have a basic interest in the outcome of public-private partnerships to improve child care. Parents also keep partnerships grounded in the realities they face in accessing quality care. Finally, legislation that creates and supports partnership projects increasingly mandates that parents serve on boards and other decision-making bodies. While understanding the value of involving parents, many private and public partners are unsure about how to work with families as equal stakeholders to create stronger, more responsive public-private-parent partnerships.

This guide is designed to assist partnerships in engaging parents[1] as partners in improving child care. It offers information on:

- why parents should be involved in child care partnerships;
- roles that parents can play in partnerships;
- how to successfully engage parents in partnerships;
- tools for engaging parents; and
- a list of additional resources, including organizations, publications, and web sites to support parent involvement efforts.

What is a Public-Private Partnership?

A public-private partnership exists when the public sector—federal, state, local, and/or tribal officials or agencies—joins with the private sector—families, employers, philanthropies, media, civic groups, and/or service providers—to attain a shared goal.

Although each partnership is unique, they typically share some common characteristics.

- They bring together public- and private-sector partners.
- Partners work together toward shared goals or objectives.
- Each partner contributes time, money, expertise, and/or other resources.
- Decision-making and management responsibilities are shared among the partners.*

* See The Child Care Partnership Project/The Finance Project, *A Guide to Successful Public-Private Partnership for Child Care*, Washington, DC: USDHHS/Child Care Bureau, 1999.

[1] In this guide, the term "parents" means parents, grandparents, godparents, and any other guardians working to improve the care of their children.

Creating Successful Partnerships: Important Considerations

Successful partnerships realize that each partner operates in a unique environment, bringing different strengths, knowledge, and resources to the mix. These partnerships draw on the strengths of the individual members while remaining sensitive to

the different corporate, government, or community "cultures" from which the members come. For example, parents may have different scheduling requirements, preferring that partnership meetings take place in the evening or on weekends so as not to conflict with their jobs. Business executives may prefer meetings during the workday. Likewise, parents may need time to learn the mechanisms for achieving partnership goals in a political and/or business arena, which could slow down the process; business executives generally place a premium on short, efficient meetings.

To create successful partnerships, leaders will have to constantly negotiate the needs of diverse partners to attract them to the partnership and keep them engaged. Understanding the needs and preferences of partners, and recognizing that these may conflict, is an important first step in this effort. Achieving harmony in a partnership that includes diverse cultures takes work. Successful partnership leaders stress that it is essential to take the time both to create common language and understanding, and to create a culture that values diverse talent, ideas and perspectives. The most successful partnerships use partners' different perspectives, talents and resources to find new solutions to old problems.[2]

[2] Further assistance in building strong partnerships is available in the following Child Care Partnership Project publications: *A Guide to Successful Public-Private Partnerships; Engaging Business in Public-Private Partnerships: A Toolkit Template; Using Results to Improve Public-Private Partnerships for Child Care; Profiles and Case Studies of Successful Public-Private Partnerships.* All of these resources are available through the Internet at http://nccic.org/ccpartnerships.

Why Involve Parents?

Successful businesses keep the customer in mind when defining desired products or services. Because parents are the ultimate consumers of child care, they need to be involved from the onset in public-private partnerships that serve their children. Effectively engaging families in partnerships with both private-sector organizations and local and state government lays the foundation for positive outcomes.

The partnership benefits because parents have many assets to contribute.

- Parents are a large constituency that can be motivated to act on behalf of children and families. Parents care deeply about their children's health, safety, and early learning. They are consumers with an avid personal interest in the outcome of the partnership.
- Parents provide invaluable insights about family needs and preferences so that partnership initiatives are truly responsive to consumers. Their insights can help steer the actions of partnerships aimed at improving quality, increasing public awareness, and enhancing consumer use of high-quality child care settings.
- Parents can broaden public support for partnerships through their connections to other families and members of their neighborhoods. They can bring unanticipated partners to the table, such as neighborhood leaders and community elders. Parent voices can also have influence with elected officials.

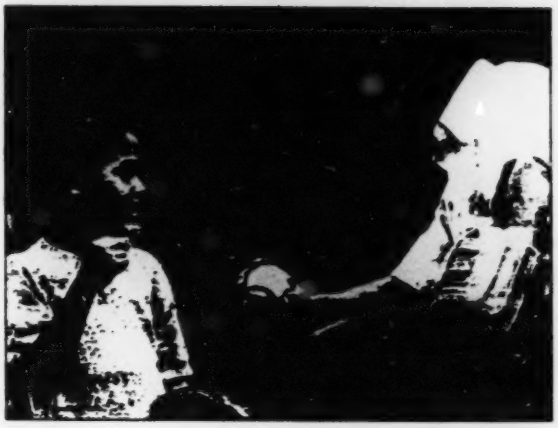
The Benefits of Parent Involvement for Parents*

Parent involvement:

- builds knowledge and skills;
- improves the lives of other families;
- opens doors for employment opportunities;
- creates a sense of belonging;
- offers a sense of accomplishment;
- provides parents opportunities to effect meaningful change;
- provides parents opportunities to network with other families and providers;
- increases confidence in parents' ability to effect change;
- models community involvement for children;
- creates active recipients of care and services;
- makes providers accountable to families;
- increases sense of personal power; and
- offers leadership role models for other families.

* Excerpted from *Making Room at the Table*, Family Resource Coalition of America, 1998.

Parents also benefit from partnerships involvement because they have the opportunity to create positive outcomes for their own children as well as other children in their communities. They can use their expertise as parents to make meaningful contributions. In the process, they may develop leadership and organizing skills that can be applied to other aspects of their lives. In the end, they can feel a sense of accomplishment for the role they played in making the partnership successful.



North Carolina: *Family Ties*

As part of its statewide efforts to give kids a smart start in life, the North Carolina Department of Human Resources developed an effective strategy for involving families in assessing the needs of other parents that has been used in several Smart Start counties. *Family Ties* aims to:

- treat parents as essential partners;
- identify low-income families with children under six years of age who do not currently receive child care or child development services;
- share information with these families about existing community resources and programs that might help them;
- obtain information about families' health and human service needs and resources; and
- build local leadership capacity by empowering parents to help others.

Family Ties employs resident parents from targeted communities to conduct this fieldwork. This facilitates entry into "hard to reach" communities and fosters local leadership development. Information shared by families in this program is combined with existing socio-economic data to inform the design and delivery of local health and human services. Attorneys have determined how to protect the rights and confidentiality of families, while at the same time enabling the gathering of sound data.

Roles That Parents Can Play

When families have the skills to lead and contribute meaningfully in partnerships, child care policies and programs benefit. Parents and family members can serve as partners with the public and private sectors in a variety of ways to improve children's health, safety, and learning. Parents can:

Influence Public Policy Decisions

Parents and families can influence policy at the local, state, and federal levels by telling their elected officials how current and proposed policies impact their lives. In Hawaii, the Good Beginnings Alliance Council of Kauai regularly informs parents and family members about pending state legislation and encourages family members to talk with their legislators. As a result, Kauai's legislative delegation is informed and supportive of child care proposals that emerge in the legislature.

Present the Consumer Voice

The voice of parents is different from the voice of business, government, providers, or other stakeholders. Parents are not hampered by the political and organizational constraints placed before providers or elected officials. They do not have to represent the institutional interests of an agency and are not guided by budget deliberations or conflicting consumer interests. Nor are they bound by political party loyalties. Parents have more flexibility in what they say, and frequently have more credibility because they are the consumers of child care services.

> "I want to learn more about kids and how I can organize a group that organizes people. I want to get people more involved..."
>
> —*Janis Mitchell, Parent*

Assure that Programs Work

Parents are experts on how a system does or does not work for families. They experience child care services in a way that early childhood experts and business leaders cannot. As partnerships design initiatives to improve child care, parents have a unique perspective and can see gaps and strengths in ideas that other partners miss. Just as the passenger in the plane sees the journey differently from the pilot, the parent's view on a partnership offers a perspective that can guide and point to gains unseen by other partners.

Spread the Word About Partnership Goals

Parents have conversations with members of the community (neighbors, police officers, local businesses), which occur naturally during sports events, neighborhood meetings, or chance meetings on the street. These contacts can be used to broaden the base of support in order to spread the word about the partnership.

Mobilize Communities

Parents can build on the personal, trusting relationships they have developed with other members of their communities when trying to mobilize support for the partnership's goals. They have credibility within a community since they are local residents and because of their personal child care experiences. This credibility can be used to broaden the base of support to advance child care partnership goals.

Parents United for Child Care (PUCC), Boston, Massachusetts

A small group of Boston parents founded Parents United for Child Care (PUCC) in 1987 with the mission of creating and mobilizing a vocal constituency of parents to impact child care policy in their communities and on the state level. Since its founding, PUCC has been working in neighborhoods throughout Boston and statewide to increase the supply of quality, affordable child care.

Based on its mission of engaging parents as community leaders on child care issues, PUCC has developed its work in several related program areas:

- documenting parent's child care needs and parent organizing;
- direct training and leadership development activities for parents; and
- supporting and providing resources for parents to partner with schools and other community organizations to expand out-of-school time programs and services in Boston.

In each program area, PUCC sets its priorities for advocacy, policy, and program work based on the needs expressed by parents, and empowers those parents to carry out the work of the organization.

How To Engage Parents in Partnerships

Many partnership leaders have effectively engaged parents in public-private partnerships. The following principles and strategies reflect their experiences and insights.

PRINCIPLE 1: TREAT PARENTS AS ESSENTIAL PARTNERS.

Parents will make time for partnership activities when they believe that their contributions are valued.

Include parents at the beginning. Make sure that parents are involved in the beginning when the goals are established. If you bring parents in after an agenda is designed, they are less likely to feel ownership for the goals. When goals change, as they often do, it is essential that parents are involved in revising goals or strategies. Not only will they have ideas to contribute, but they are more likely to stay involved in thinking through the partnership's next steps.

Develop realistic, attainable expectations and goals. Planned steps toward a realistic goal become a clear map for all participants. Make sure that parents agree to the goals and to the timelines associated with achieving the goals.

Build a critical mass. Parents are more likely to feel empowered if they are not the only parent in the partnership, and are not expected to speak on behalf of all parents. Adding more parents to the partnership is not enough. Ensure diversity by balancing experienced parent leaders with those who are new to the role. Include fathers and grandparents as well as mothers. Seek a range of parents from different economic and ethnic backgrounds.

> "Sometimes we feel that we are not heard because we are 'just parents.' We must break down those barriers."
>
> —*Mary Beth Moore, Parent*

Maximize parents' strengths. Partnership leaders should make the effort to get to know the individual strengths of parent partners. Good leaders maximize the strengths of all partners, and parents are no exception. Offer a wide range of roles that parents can play to contribute to the partnership's mission. The Parent Talent Assessment Tool printed later in this guide can help in this process.

Create a sense of parent ownership in the change process. Facilitate parent leadership and action planning at key junctures in the change process. Help guide innovative parent ideas into strategies.

Make it a team effort. All partners must recognize the value of having parents as part of the partnership. It is not enough for the partnership leaders to treat parents as essential partners. Find ways to ensure that all partners interact with and respect what parents bring to the partnership.

PRINCIPLE 2: PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SUPPORTS FOR PARENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL PARTNERS.

Some parents will require minimal guidance to make a meaningful contribution to the partnership. Others will need support in developing the skills necessary to articulate their opinions and take action. All parents appreciate having the supports they need to make valuable contributions.

> "If we want to enable parents to become decision-makers and participants in children's programs and policies, we must expand the leadership training programs and develop more methods to increase parent involvement and leadership in children's health, safety, and learning."
>
> —*Anna E. Rivera, Parent*

Provide family supports such as food, child care, and transportation. Not only do such supports matter on a practical level, but they also improve group cohesion and morale.

Create a space where parents feel comfortable and valued. Successful partnerships create an environment that is warm, that offers dignity to every participant, and that accommodates parents' time constraints. When parents feel comfortable, they are more likely to share their ideas.

> "I would like to pass on skills that I learn to other parents. I want to be a link in the chain."
>
> —*Christopher Service, Parent*

Provide "hands on" training and guidance. Effective partnership leaders assess what skills are needed to accomplish tasks and create opportunities for parents to develop necessary skills. This may include mentoring, as well as informal and formal training opportunities. The resource section of this guide provides information on leadership programs.

Establish peer networks among family leaders. Building peer networks creates an infrastructure for broader, enduring communities of parent leaders. Peer support, both within and outside the group, offers connections that can both fuel creative ideas for children and keep families involved.

Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), Hartford, Connecticut

The Parent Leadership Training Institute is a training program that seeks to enable parents, grandparents, and others raising children to become leading advocates for children. The program was designed collaboratively by the Connecticut Commission on Children, the American Leadership Forum, and Leadership Greater Hartford.

The goals of the program are to:

- help parents become the leaders they would like to be for children and families;
- expand the capacity of parents as change agents for children and families;
- develop communities of parents within regions of the state that will support one another in skill development and successful parent action for children;
- facilitate systems change for parental involvement with increased utilization of parents in policy and process decisions; and
- increase parent-child interactions and improve child outcomes through parent involvement.

In an effort to achieve these goals, parents participate in a comprehensive training that includes a retreat to develop group communication, 10 weeks of classes on self and perception of leadership, 10 weeks on practicing democracy and civic skills, and a graduation at the State Capitol. After they have completed the training, parents serve as mentors and advisors for future training classes. The following states have adapted and are using the PLTI model: California, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.

Establish opportunities for parents to meet diverse civic leaders. Bringing parents together with policy leaders can make parents feel more appreciated for participating in the process and more connected to their community.

Principle 3: Acknowledge parent contributions.

Families, like other partners, respond positively to leaders who acknowledge their accomplishments. Everyone appreciates recognition, and partnerships should make time to celebrate even small successful efforts.

Document parents' contributions. Successful partnerships document parents' contributions to partnership efforts and allow other partners to see the expected and unexpected assets that parents bring to the table.

Follow-up on actions that take place outside of partnership meetings. Like other partners, parents become disengaged if they are left hanging with no follow-up. When an action step entails parent activity away from the partnership meeting, ensure that there is an opportunity to share insights and link the activity to the broader action plan of the group.

Cultivate public attention for the contributions that parents make. Media outlets often look for stories of unsung heroes. Public officials are more likely to respond if parents deliver the message. Look for ways to bring recognition to parents. This not only makes parents feel good, it raises awareness about the work of the partnership.

Celebrate! Celebrate! Celebrate! Awards dinners, acknowledgements from prominent business or political figures, and small and large parties are all ways to celebrate the contributions of parents (and other partners). Such occasions build good will and momentum to continue the hard work.

"So many issues affect children today. They require not only commitment and enthusiasm, but also a stronger and clearer understanding of ourselves, society and the 'system', as well as leadership, communication, organizational and other essential skills to become effective in accomplishing our goals. Parent leadership training successfully graduates participants who are empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to serve as more effective advocates on behalf of children."

—Roxanne Y. Davenport, Parent

West Virginia: The Family Leadership Project

Understanding the importance of input and leadership from families, the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families, in association with the Family Resource Coalition of America, established the Family Leadership Project. Throughout the state, the leadership project works to enhance family leadership in organizations such as Family Resource Networks, Head Start Policy Councils, Birth-to-Three Services, and regional Family Support Councils.

The goals of the Family Leadership Project are to:

- **identify partners who can help support family leadership with resources and with their own leadership programs;**
- **seek input from families about leadership training, and designing the leadership project;**
- **review existing models of leadership training and development within West Virginia and the nation, and promote the models that seem to fit West Virginia best;**
- **build family involvement into decision-making about supports and services that will impact their lives; and**
- create a resource center to sustain the leadership project.

The project uses volunteer teams to accomplish these goals, including training and material development and measuring progress and results.

Tools for Engaging Parents

This section contains three tools that partnerships can use to help engage parents.

1. Tips for Engaging Parents

Some parents and family members already have the skills and desire to interact with business, community, or government leaders as change agents. Others need encouragement and support to become active members of a partnership. These tips summarize and briefly reiterate ways to get families involved, keep them involved, and help them thrive as participants and supporters of child care partnerships.

2. Parent Involvement Checklist

Even effective partnerships need a periodic checkup to make sure that parents are engaged and active. This checklist can help partnerships make sure that they are incorporating the most effective strategies as they engage parent partners. Use it in a group to start discussion on how the partnership might expand or improve.

3. Parent Talent Self-Assessment Tool

This quick quiz can be used by parents to assess their own skills and talents so that they can identify what they can contribute to the partnership.

Tips for Engaging Parents

1. *Consult numerous parents before beginning an action plan.* Seek parent input from those who will be affected by a partnership initiative.
2. *Listen to parents.* Include parent ideas as regular partnership meeting agenda items. Let parents define goals for action.
3. *Provide family supports for meetings.* Offer dinner, child care, and transportation.
4. *Use lay language.* Don't use professional in-house phrases such as "developmentally appropriate practice" when parents care about love, nurturing, and safety.
5. *Link participation to real change and active leadership.* Parents know what is real and active. They operate within power structures every day at home and at work.
6. *Offer civic skills and leadership training.* Help parents become leaders by providing them with basic information on budgets, outcomes, media power, how government works, and the policy-making process.
7. *Do not shy away from religion.* Religion is a mobilizing force in many communities. It is often a base from which parent and community action organizing can take place.
8. *Have parents recruit and mentor other parents.* Parents are more likely to get involved if they already know someone who is involved.
9. *Embrace diversity.* Tolerate differences and create agendas and plans that incorporate multiple views within shared values. Bring in the fathers and grandfathers. Include parents who are experienced leaders, as well as those who need experience being leaders.
10. *Celebrate short-term and concrete successes routinely.* Recognition of small successes builds momentum and general enthusiasm for the partnership goals.
11. *Create reciprocal relationships.* Share what parents want from the partnership, as well as what the partnership wants from parents.
12. *Select one or two parents to organize parent feedback on partnership activities* in environments where parents can fully share their ideas. Treat parents' input as primary information. Train parent facilitators to create parent memos with all parent feedback recorded for the partnership to read and discuss.
13. *Set up parent evaluation teams each year for partnership programs.* Use the opportunity to listen to the language, values, goals, and community expectations of the parents. Assess how and if the values and expectations of partnership leaders and staff correspond with parents' values and expectations.
14. *Create opportunities for parents to meet one another.* When partnerships just work with parents one on one, the opportunity for parents to meet other parents is diminished. This paints a vertical, individualized interpretation of issues, rather than a horizontal community analysis of gaps in services or needs.
15. *Create environments where children see their parents as leaders.* Reflect the values of partnership in the environments and initiatives you create. Offer dinners, honorary membership, and awards for family members who contribute to a policy. Invite family and friends to attend the honoring.

Parent Involvement Checklist

Give each question a "yes" or "no" answer. Then as a group consider how you might expand or improve your efforts for each question.

Yes	*No*	
❒	❒	Do we conduct outreach activities and regularly invite interested parents to participate in partnership activities?
❒	❒	Do we ensure that both fathers and mothers participate?
❒	❒	Do we generate an intergenerational view on issues by including grandparents, aunts, uncles, youth, and other family members?
❒	❒	Do we assess the skills and training needs of parents and other partners?
❒	❒	Do we offer training for parents and other partners on civic skills?
❒	❒	Do we assign meaningful tasks that appropriately utilize parents' skills and contacts?
❒	❒	Do we ask parents to take on specific leadership activities in neighborhoods, and churches, and/or with other community institutions?
❒	❒	Do we record and review all input from parents throughout the partnership planning and implementation stages?
❒	❒	Do we develop environments where parents speak and lead meetings on specified issues?
❒	❒	Do we develop mechanisms for groups of parents and individual families to offer feedback on why and how a partnership strategy is faring?
❒	❒	Do we keep parents and other partners informed on relevant national, state, and local policy issues?
❒	❒	Do we minimize professional jargon and use words that fully describe and bring purpose and meaning to partnership issues and concerns?
❒	❒	Do we ask parents to document their involvement in partnership activities?
❒	❒	Do we model the principle that consumer input and need drives successful product and strategy development?

Parent Talent Self-Assessment Tool

Check each of the following talents you have. Rate your talents between 1 and 5, with 5 being very talented and 1 being a little talented.

I am able to organize

- __ plan
- __ think logically
- __ clarify
- __ be efficient
- __ synthesize ideas
- __ analyze

I can see opportunities

- __ imagine/envision
- __ design things

I can lead

- __ motivate
- __ inspire
- __ persuade
- __ initiate
- __ execute
- __ persist

I can instruct

- __ advise
- __ tell stories with lessons
- __ experiment

I can manage

- __ juggle many responsibilities
- __ be self-disciplined

I can put people at ease

- __ mediate
- __ negotiate
- __ harmonize
- __ balance
- __ tolerant
- __ generous
- __ cooperative

I am able to

- __ make things work (mechanical)
- __ build things
- __ be artistic
- __ make beautiful things
- __ perform
- __ express ideas with words
- __ express ideas through art
- __ express ideas through music
- __ interpret

Other talents I have are:

Resources

National Organizations and Parent Training Programs*

The following organizations have successfully engaged parents as partners in their mission. They can serve as role models and resources for those working to engage parents as partners in improving child care.

Beach Center on Families and Disability

University of Kansas
3111 Haworth Hall
Lawrence, KS 66045
Phone: (785) 864-7600 (V/TTY)
Fax: (785) 864-5825
Email: beach@dole.lsi.ukans.edu
Web site: http://www.lsi.ukans.edu/beach/beachhp.htm

Works to provide families with the resources and skills needed to help their children with disabilities to reach their full potential. Conducts research on empowering adolescents and parents of children with disabilities, family support policy, friendships, family-centered care, child abuse and neglect, and the role of fathers.

Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)

2748 North Southport
Chicago, IL 60614
Phone: (773) 477-3847
Fax: (773) 477-4333
Contact: Ellen Schumer, Executive Director

Helps parents build their leadership capacity in order to impact changes in their schools and communities and to be the kind of parents and people they want to be. COFI partners with local community groups to provide leadership training that links personal, family, and community developments.

Family Support Network

21902 Second Avenue West
Bothell, WA 98021
Phone: (800) 529-2294 or (425) 487-4009
Email: wecare@familynetwork.org
Web site: http://www.familynetwork.org

A network of responsible citizens who are willing to exchange services and support, both locally and nationwide. Families serve in a variety of ways, such as providing meals to shut-ins and respite to those in need. Community members complete a two-part, 16-hour certification training where they learn leadership, community building, team building, resource pooling, and peer support skills. They also learn what is happening at the local and state level in the areas of family preservation and family support.

Family Voices

P.O. Box 769
Algodones, NM 87001
Phone: (505) 867-2368
Fax: (505) 867-6517
Email: kidshealth@familyvoices.org
Web site: http://www.familyvoices.org

A national grassroots organization of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs. Founded by parents who developed national and state family networks and organizations to improve the health and education systems that serve their children.

* A number of these resources come from *America's Family Support Magazine*, Family Resource Coalition of America, Spring 1999, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 24-40.

FAMILY SUPPORT AMERICA (FSA)
(FORMERLY FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION OF AMERICA)
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PHONE: (518) 462-2445
FAX: (518) 462-9098
WEB SITE: www.frca.org
CONTACTS: Gail Koser, Senior Policy Advisor and Director of Strategic Alliances, or David Diehl, Evaluation Specialist and Technical Assistance Specialist

An alliance of people and organizations convinced that in order to do the best we can by our children, we need to support and strengthen families and communities. Gathers knowledge, provides consulting services, advocates for public policy, builds constituency and networks, and produces publications and materials. FSA also convenes organizations that are interested in promoting greater family involvement and leadership to develop integrated approaches and strategies.

FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: INTERAGENCY COORDINATION COUNCIL (ICC)
Parent Leadership Training
1135 Tremont Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02120
PHONE: (800) 331-0688 or (617) 236-7210
FAX: (617) 572-2094
EMAIL: fcsninfo@fcsn.org
WEB SITE: http://www.fcsn.org

A nonprofit organization based on the philosophy of parents helping parents. Founded in 1974 as a coalition of 12 disability and parent organizations, today the Federation is an independent advocacy organization committed to quality education and health care for all, and to protecting the rights of all children. To this end, the Federation provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their organizations, their professional partners, and their communities. The Federation is based on the idea that listening to and learning from families and from people with disabilities about their experiences, knowledge, hopes, and dreams are fundamental to shaping a society in which everyone's contributions count.

FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
PHONE: (703) 684-7710
FAX: (703) 836-1040
EMAIL: ffcmh@crosslink.net
WEB SITE: http://www.ffcmh.org

A national parent-run organization focused on the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders and their families. Serves as a catalyst for change by promoting partnerships among family members, professionals, and other interested citizens to improve services for children with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders. Also provides leadership training for parents in advocacy and community outreach.

THE FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME FAMILY RESOURCE INSTITUTE
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FAX: (253) 531-2668
EMAIL: vicfas@hotmail.com

A national organization that works with parents and professionals to help them identify, under-

stand, and care for individuals with fetal alcohol syndrome and prenatal alcohol-related disabilities.

FREE TO GROW
Head Start Partnerships to Promote Substance-Free Communities
The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University
60 Haven Avenue, Apt. 1D
New York, NY 10032
PHONE: (212) 304-6414
FAX: (212) 304-6420
EMAIL: ls273@columbia.edu
CONTACT: Lori Levine, Deputy Director

Initiated in 1994 as a partnership between the Head Start Bureau and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Free to Grow strengthens both the families and communities of the young Head Start child. Resident-driven activities are supported by extensive training in community development, including the principles of community action, community assessment, environmental approaches to community change, and community collaboration. Currently at the end of its model development phase, Free to Grow hopes to build a public/private partnership to expand its work to up to 20 additional Head Start communities over the next four years.

LINKING OUR VOICES
Head Start Bureau
Switzer Building
330 C Street SW, Room 2224
Washington, DC 20447
PHONE: (202) 205-8399
FAX: (202) 401-5916
WEB SITE: http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb
CONTACT: Frankie Hoover Gibson, Parent Involvement Program Specialist

A video-based program used to train parents and community representatives who are active in Head Start Policy Councils. Members of these councils promote and support parents in getting involved as decision-makers and primary educators of their children through local Head Start programs. The LOV training, available in English and Spanish, includes a 22-minute video and printed materials. A facilitator's manual contains detailed instructions for four workshops (which normally take from 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours each).

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING (MADD)
511 E. John Carpenter Freeway, No. 700
Irving, TX 75062
PHONE: (972) 869-2206
FAX: (214) 744-6233
WEB SITE: http://www.madd.org

A parent-led organization that trains parents to get involved in schools and talk to the media to advocate against drunk driving. MADD parents serve on public, law enforcement, and legislative advisory boards and aid in establishing local and county initiatives and task forces. Parents provide victim assistance and conduct outreach. Workshops and publications available.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD ADVOCATES (NACA)
1522 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
PHONE: (202) 289-0777
FAX: (202) 289-0776
EMAIL: naca@childadvocacy.org
WEB SITE: http://www.childadvocacy.org

Secures the safety, health, and education of children by building and strengthening state and community-based child advocacy organizations.

Engages in advocacy work with policymakers and the media.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
c/o National Community Education Association
3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91A
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: (703) 359-8973
Fax: (703) 359-0972
Email: ferguson@ncea.com
Web site: http://www.ncpie.org

Advocates for the involvement of parents in their children's education and fosters relationships among home, school, and community that enhance young people's education. Is a collaboration of education, community, and public service organizations nationwide. Provides information on publications, training, and services available.

Parent Advocates for Youth (PAY)
459 Vienna
San Francisco, CA 94112
Phone: (415) 239-0161
Fax: (415) 239-0584
Email: coleman@sirius.com
Web site: http://www.colemanadvocates.org

A parent group created in 1994 by Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth in San Francisco. PAY is aimed at providing parents with the opportunity and know-how to improve the lives of children throughout the San Francisco. PAY consists of a core group of parents who are trained to take the initiative and to stand up and speak out for themselves and their children. Issues PAY has taken on include park safety, parents' rights in the public schools, and the school lunch program.

Parent Leadership Program (PLP)
The ARC Michigan
333 South Washington Square, Suite 200
Lansing, MI 48933
Phone: (800) 292-7851 or (517) 487-5426
Fax: (517) 487-0303
Email: arcmi@voyager.net
Web site: http://www.arcmi.org

A parent leadership training program of the Applied Research Center (ARC) of Michigan. PLP supports families, helping them to increase their knowledge, fine-tune their skills, and access tools that enable them to share their personal vision. At the trainings, PLP staff and graduates provide learning activities about: sharing your story, developing effective collaborative relationships, resolving conflicts, appreciating diversity, and communicating clearly. Participants leave PLP with the capacity to act as effective parent leaders.

The Parent Leadership Institute
P.O. Box 50492
Palo Alto, CA 94303
Phone: (650) 322-5323
Fax: (650) 322-5179
Web site: http://www.parentleaders.org
Contact: Patty Wipfler, Director

Brings listening, parenting, and leadership skills to parents and those who work with young people through: listening skill development workshops; leadership training for parents and leaders of parents; a program that brings parenting talks, classes, and ongoing parent resource groups to the workplace, at noontime; and booklets, audiotapes, and video-tapes that summarize basic information on how parents can build support for themselves and how they can help build and repair their children's

confidence. Booklets are available in English, Spanish, and Swedish.

PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE (PLTI)
Connecticut Commission on Children
18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106
PHONE: (860) 240-0290
FAX: (860) 240-0248
EMAIL: ruth.sales@po.state.ct.us
WEB SITE: http://www.state.ct.us/coc
CONTACTS: Elaine Zimmerman, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Children, or Ruth Sales, Program Director for Statewide PLTI Initiative

Helps parents become leading advocates for children. It teaches parents who wish to improve the lifelong health, safety, and learning of children how to become practiced agents for change. PLTI creates new voices for children by bringing in previously ignored stakeholders and training them to become leaders.

PARENT SERVICES PROJECT, INC. (PSP, INC.)
199 Porteous Avenue
Fairfax, CA 94930
PHONE: (415) 454-1811
FAX: (415) 454-1752
CONTACT: Ethel Seiderman

Promotes the health and well-being of children, families, and communities by developing and expanding quality family support and parent involvement services in early care and education settings. Enables families to become a vigorous and optimistic voice in advocating for the health and well-being of themselves and others. PSP, Inc., is founded on the principles of family support and views the child in the context of the family and the community. PSP, Inc. programs, training, and services focus on partnership, empowerment, family strengths, cultural competence, and social support and are family driven.

PARENTS ANONYMOUS
675 West Foothill Boulevard, Suite 220
Claremont, CA 91711-3475
PHONE: (909) 621-6184
FAX: (909) 625-6304
EMAIL: parentsanon@msn.com
WEB SITE: http://www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

Provides technical assistance and training on a variety of leadership skills for parents. Trains parents to train other parents to operate mutual support groups. Based on a vision that establishing parent input, leadership, and mutual support are essential components in strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect.

PARENTS AS LEADERS
240 Waisman Center
1500 Highland Avenue
Madison, WI 53706
PHONE: (608) 263-6745
FAX: (608) 263-0529
EMAIL: swedeen@waisman.wisc.edu

Parents as leaders is part of the Wisconsin Personnel Development Project, funded by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Birth to Three Program. The Parents as Leaders Program, brings caregivers of children from birth to age 6 with developmental disabilities together five times per year to: learn about topics of interest such as available resources and family rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act; meet some of the key people who make the policies and run the

programs that affect children with special needs and their families in Wisconsin; and develop leadership skills. Through the Parents as Leaders Program, parents become part of a network of parents of young children with disabilities who are knowledgeable about education, health, and social service issues; are active in their communities; support each other; and have fun together!

PARENTS AS TEACHERS
10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230
St. Louis, MO 63132
PHONE: (314) 432-4330
FAX: (314) 432-8963
EMAIL: patnc@patnc.org
WEB SITE: http://www.patnc.org

Trains parents to be educators in its nationally replicated program to provide parents with the information and support they need to give their children the best possible start in life. Parents become certified to conduct home visits, coordinate group meetings, conduct developmental screenings, and link parents with providers of service and support. Parent educators work in partnership with the school and the community. Offers a variety of training and technical assistance.

PARENTS UNITED FOR CHILD CARE (PUCC)
30 Winter Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
PHONE: (617) 426-8288
FAX: (617) 542-1515
EMAIL: smith@pucc.com

A grassroots membership organization of low and moderate income parents committed to increasing the supply of quality, affordable child care in Massachusetts. PUCC uses a variety of strategies — community organizing and leadership development, political advocacy, and resource development — to accomplish its goals.

THE PARENT VOICES PROJECT
California Child Care Resource and
Referral Network
111 Montgomery Street, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
PHONE: (415) 882-0234
FAX: (415) 882-6233
EMAIL: www.rrnetwork.org
CONTACT: Patty Siegel

A parent-led and parent-run group that is committed to strengthening the capacity of parents to effectively advocate for their child care concerns. This project organizes parents of young children to advocate on their own behalf for quality, affordable child care. Its long-term goal is to make quality and affordable child care available to all parents who need or use subsidized child care. It sponsors and supports legislation, enables parents to be active participants in local and state budget processes to ensure that child care funding is always part of the budget, and undertakes local and/or statewide campaigns to increase funding for child care, especially for low-income working parents.

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING
New York State Developmental Disabilities
Planning Council
155 Washington Avenue, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12210
PHONE: (800) 395-3372
FAX: (518) 402-3505
WEB SITE: http://www.ddpc.state.ny.us
CONTACT: Sheila M. Carey, Executive Director

Provides training and skill building to individuals with disabilities, parents, caregivers, and family members. The program enables them to advocate for their own rights and empowers them to become active in policymaking with respect to specific projects. Participants get acquainted and connect with organizations, opportunities, and other resources as they learn about current disability issues at the local, state, and national levels. The goal is to achieve a productive partnership between policymakers and those in need of disability-oriented services and support.

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173
Phone: (202) 401-2000
Fax: (202) 205-9133
Email: Partner@ed.gov
Web site: http://www.pfie.ed.gov

Seeks to encourage the development of family-school-community partnerships to promote children's learning and improve education. Committed to improving local schools and increasing family involvement in education.

Referral and Information Network (R.A.I.N.) Parents, Inc.
1420 Washington Avenue
Miami Beach, FL 33139
Phone: (305) 674-7805 or (305) 675-8557
Fax: (305) 534-2741

R.A.I.N. is a school-based not-for-profit agency run by and for parents that is dedicated to providing assistance to low-income families in Miami Beach, Florida. R.A.I.N.'s mission is to alleviate homelessness, hunger, and poverty, and to advocate for the improved quality of life for all Miami Beach residents. R.A.I.N. runs empowerment training courses for parents who want to learn to take charge of improving their quality of life and starting on the path to self-sufficiency. The courses help parents learn to become involved in their children's schools so that students will become healthy learners. In addition, R.A.I.N. offers a number of supports and services for families such as affordable child care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; emergency cash assistance; job training; and health insurance outreach.

The Right Question Project, Inc.
2464 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 314
Cambridge, MA 02140
Phone: (617) 492-1900
Fax: (617) 492-1950
Web site: http://www.rightquestion.org
Contact: Luz Santana, Director of Training

Strengthens the democratic process by teaching people to participate more effectively in making decisions that affect them. The RQP helps parents develop the skills in formulating questions and thinking critically that they need in order to be involved in decisions that affect their children's education. Parents trained in the program practice the Question Formulation Technique, which can be applied to multiple issues affecting their families and communities.

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications are additional sources of information on how to engage parents as effective partners.

EMPOWERMENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Moncrieff Cochran, editor

1995, 167 pp.

PUBLISHED BY: Cornell Empowerment Group

AVAILABLE FROM: Family Resource Coalition of America ((312) 338-0900)

From the leading researchers in parent empowerment comes this compilation of two years' worth of a networking bulletin published by members of the Cornell Empowerment Group. Articles offer research findings and program models to show how family support can empower families, especially low-income families, to meet the challenges that face them. Special topics include child care and the empowerment process, redefining the professional role, and a global view of empowerment and family support.

ESSENTIAL ALLIES: FAMILIES AS ADVISORS

by Elizabeth S. Jeppson and Josie Thomas

1995, 76 pp.

PUBLISHED BY: Institute for Family-Centered Care

AVAILABLE FROM: Family Resource Coalition of America ((312) 338-0900)

A guide for family resource centers to involve parents in a variety of ways. Discusses the benefits of and barriers to parent-provider collaboration, and provides tips for developing partnerships with parents.

FINDINGS FROM AN EVALUATION OF THE PARENT INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

by Gail L. Zellman, Brain Stecher, Stephen Klein, Daniel McCafrey with Silvia Gutierrez, Roger Madison, Denise D. Quigley, Lisa Suarez

1998, 19 pp.

PUBLISHED BY: RAND Education ((310) 451-7002)

Programs designed to improve children's educational outcomes by teaching parents to become more involved in their child's schooling are widely offered by school districts. However, these programs are rarely evaluated, so it is difficult for conclusions to be drawn about their effectiveness in meeting their goals. The evaluation in this document was based on data from two large school districts — outcome data from over 2,000 students in one district and interview data from the second — to evaluate a local parent involvement program. This report will be of interest to providers of parent involvement programs, school district personnel, and others concerned about helping children to learn and the ways that parents can help to make that happen.

LEARNING FROM COLLEAGUES: FAMILY/PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

by the Peer Technical Assistance Network

1998, 51 pp.

PUBLISHED BY: Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health ((703) 684-7710)

This document presents research and commentary on the issues involved in utilizing a family/professional partnership systems approach in situations involving children who have developed or are at risk of developing serious emotional, behavioral, or mental health disturbances and their families.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Learning to Be Partners
Lynn E. Pooley, Flora Woratscheck, and Jeanne Williams, eds. (FRCA, Center for Assessment and Policy Development, and University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development)
1997, 250 pp.
Published by: Family Resource Coalition of America ((312) 338-0900)

This ready-to-use training program contains a week's worth of activities, handouts, discussion ideas, and mini-lectures to help staff begin to develop the skills and knowledge they need to act as true partners with families. Written by a team of seasoned practitioners, trainers, and researchers, the curriculum uses group experience rather than "classroom" learning, active participation, hands-on practice, and peer interaction and sharing. With this detailed road map, the trainer can guide staff who are new to family support through a validating and supportive experience.

Making Room at the Table
by Elizabeth Jeppson, Josit Thomas, Anthony Markward, Joanne Kelly, Gail Koser, David Diehl
1997, 72 pp.
Published by: Family Resource Coalition of America ((312) 338-0900)

With this program of guided activities, families, program planners, staff, policymakers, and other key players develop the awareness and skills they will need to work as a team in planning services and carrying out programs.

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs
by the National PTA
1998, 42 pp.
Published by: National PTA ((312) 670-6782)

Developed by the PTA in cooperation with education and parent involvement professionals, these standards — communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision making and advocacy, and collaborating with community — were created to be used in conjunction with other national standards and reform initiatives in support of children's learning and success.

Partnerships for Change
1997, 2 videos plus 50-page guide
Published by: Family Communications, Inc. and University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development
Available from: Family Resource Coalition of America ((312) 338-0900)

This video-supported training program stresses partnership, shared decision-making, local governance, and collaboration. Staff members and parents undergo training together and gain skills in identifying strengths, communicating needs, and reaching out to others in the community. Available in Spanish and English.

On-line Resources

National Child Care Information Center
http://nccic.org

The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) has been established by the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to complement, enhance, and promote child care linkages and to serve as a mechanism for supporting quality, comprehensive services for children and families.

National Congress of Parents and Teachers
http://www.pta.org

Web site of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers provides information for parents, teachers, students, principals, administrators, and others interested in uniting the forces of home, school, and community on behalf of children and youth.

Head Start Bureau
http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb

Web site maintained by the Head Start Bureau as an electronic resource for Head Start service providers, parents, volunteers, community organizations, and others, who share and interest in helping children look forward to a brighter future.

The National Parent Network on Disabilities (NPND) Parent Training and Information Centers
http://www.npnd.org/ptis.htm

Provides a list of parent training and information centers in the United States. The majority of the centers serve the entire state, while others are community-based and serve more local areas.